

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Accordingly, the present invention also relates to a process for manufacturing a powders-affixed nonwoven fabric comprising the steps of:

ejecting aggregates of fine short fibers having a fiber diameter of 4 μm or less and a fiber length of 3 mm or less, or a group of the aggregates, and/or mechanically dividable fiber capable of generating fine short fibers having a fiber diameter of 4 μm or less and a fiber length of 3 mm or less, or aggregates of the mechanically dividable fibers, together with powder materials, from a nozzle into a gas by an action of a

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~~compressed gas, to thereby divide the aggregates of the fine short fibers or the group thereof into the fine short fibers, and/or divide the mechanically dividable fibers or the aggregates thereof into the fine short fibers, and disperse the resulting fine short fibers and the powder materials;
collecting the dispersed fine short fibers and the powder materials to form a powders-containing fiber web; and affixing the powder materials, while forming a nonwoven fabric from the powders-containing fiber web to obtain the powders-affixed nonwoven fabric.~~

Please delete the paragraph bridging pages 4 and 5 and replace it with the following new paragraph:

A3
In accordance with the present invention, there is also provided a sheet material comprising at least one layer of a powders-affixed nonwoven fabric prepared from a fiber web comprising powder materials and fine short fibers having a fiber diameter of 4 μm or less and a fiber length of 3 mm or less in a dispersed state in the fiber web, the powders-containing fiber web being formed by a method other than a wet-laid method.

Page 5, please delete the second full paragraph and replace it with the following new paragraph:

A4
In accordance with the present invention, there is also provided a process for manufacturing a sheet material comprising the steps of:
Ejecting aggregates of fine short fibers having a fiber diameter of 4 μm or less and a fiber length of 3 mm or less, or a group of the aggregates, and/or mechanically dividable fibers capable of generating fine short fibers having a fiber diameter of 4 μm or less and a fiber length of 3 mm or less, or aggregates of the mechanically dividable fibers, together with powder materials, from a nozzle into a gas by an action of a compressed gas, to thereby divide the aggregates of the fine short fibers or the group thereof into the fine short fibers, and/or divide the mechanically dividable fibers or the aggregates thereof into the fine short fibers, and disperse the resulting fine short fibers and the powder materials;
collecting the dispersed fine short fibers and the powder materials to form a powder-containing fiber web; and affixing the powder materials, while forming a nonwoven fabric from the powders-containing fiber web, and at the same time bonding a layer free of the powder materials, to obtain the sheet material containing a powders-affixed nonwoven fabric.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please enter the following amended claims:

- A5
1. (amended) A powders-affixed nonwoven fabric prepared from a fiber web comprising powder materials and fine short fibers having a fiber diameter of 4 μm or less and a fiber length of 3 mm or less in